



SEATTLE PARKS
AND RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Summer 2003

WALKING OUR TALK

Note from Ken Bounds

Walking Our Talk

Through our work at Seattle Parks and Recreation, we create opportunities for people to express what environmental stewardship means to them. Likewise, this "Walking Our Talk" newsletter is an opportunity for all of us to tell the stories of how we define stewardship, and how we use our talents and creativity to care for our city, our region, and our world.

Environmental Stewardship means the actions we take that respect the rights of all living things and all environments, and that contribute to healthy and livable communities. It's people caring for Seattle and our natural resources for today and tomorrow.

In this newsletter and in future editions you will read about a few of our most recent stewardship successes and the staff who made them possible.

A recent example is the development of a new clean air and resource conservation program called "Mind Your Idle." Air pollutants are on the rise in King County. Seattle is close to violating federal clean air standards, putting our friends and families in the top 5% in the nation for cancer risk due to air toxins.

Through the work of our newly established Seattle Parks Idle Reduction Task Force (Patrick Merriam, August Drake-Ericson, Ken Dyer, Rodney Nealer, Willie Rogers, Warren Malbrough, Allison Vieshlow, Jeff Cobb, Patrick Applewhaite, Adam Cole, Eric Prindle, and Eric Edwards) we are improving our air and using less fuel by eliminating unnecessary vehicle idling.

To see more Parks environmental programs, please visit our new Environmental Stewardship homepage at www.seattle.gov/parks/environment/index.htm.

Thanks for making Seattle a great place to live, a healthy place to work, and a fun place to visit.

See you soon.

Ken Bounds, Superintendent

Plug in, Turn Off, Save Bucks

Parks' Electrical Shop Crew has done an outstanding job retrofitting park facilities to reduce our use of electricity. The crew has replaced 272 exit signs with Light Emitting Diodes (LED) signs in 65 buildings. It costs about \$4 pr year in electricity to operate an LED exit sign. The crew have also placed 103 occupancy sensors in those buildings, which turn off lights when people are not present. The electrical shop's biggest job recently was the lighting conversion at the Amy Yee Tennis Center, a partnership with Seattle City Light which significantly improved the lighting and will save Parks \$38,000 per year in electricity costs.

Conservation Confidential



Q. Who was that gentleman I saw running across Gasworks Park?

Recently, Emmanuel Cruz was spotted practicing smart idle reduction tactics in the North Central area. Emmanuel is part of the evening Pro Parks crew, and he recently went over to offer assistance to a woman who turned out to be Maureen O'Neill. But first he paused to turn off his truck engine. Kudos for both great customer service and a great environmental stewardship ethic!

Q. What does IKEA have to do with conservation?

Cool, reusable dishes for day care. Marci Jaye, KidZone Director at Loyal Heights Community Center, bought inexpensive and colorful coordinating plates and cups for her kid snacks, reducing the center's garbage and the cost of disposables. Loyal Heights has a commercial dishwasher, so this eco-friendly behavior saves both trees and resources.

Q. I say you can recycle Post-its and paper ream wrappers, but my co-worker says we can't? Who's right?

You are, but please don't gloat! Post-its and ream wrappers are recyclable, as is all paper except wet, waxed or soiled paper (pizza boxes) and used paper towels and plates. Our recycling vendor takes all paper grades; be sure to keep it clean and dry. Thanks.

Q. I know turning off the lights when spaces aren't used saves energy, but doesn't that hurt the bulbs?

Most florescent bulbs have 6,667 on/off cycles before they wear out, but with electricity at 8 cents per kilowatt-hour, the Lighting Design Lab says, "the most efficient lamp is one that is not on when it is not needed." So, turn off the juice when not in use!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Send us your conservation questions — parkses@seattle.gov



Back row: Jason Matheny, Steve Gracy, Kevin Pates, Gary Glembotski, Mun Reddy Front row: Mary Rasmussen, Leia Gifford, Dan Ordona, Elizabeth Castro

Here we go with H2O!

It's a wet and wild season for Seattle Parks day camps, and not just because a splash in the sprinkler feels great on a hot summer day... it's because water is the focus of this summer's environmental stewardship efforts for youth aged 5–11 years old. During the citywide training from June 11th–13th, day camp directors and counselors were “showered” with a season's supply of water-themed materials, arts & crafts supplies, and training provided by the Environmental Stewardship Unit (ESU). ESU also offered an on-site training option to each of the 23 day camp units.

The rainbow of environmental stewardship assets available to day camp staff includes several more colors this summer. Environmental Learning Center (ELC) staff naturalists at Camp Long, Carkeek Park, Discovery Park and Seward Park are offering their regional community centers one free day camp program. They are carrying over themes from the water unit in their activities, and offering resource assistance regarding water and other earth topics.

The Seattle Aquarium is offering day campers a free one hour guided tour chock full of hands-on activities and behind-the-scenes stories of the aquatic animals that live there.

Thanks to a grant from the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) Opportunity Fund, TREC (Teens for Recreation and Environmental Conservation) naturalists are providing programs for day camps at Seward Park. There are several TREC naturalists who are implementing water-themed activities directly with day campers at Queen Anne and Rainier Community Centers.



**Tidepooling with
Naturalist Willie Campbell**

Going for the Gold



Carkeek Park is the new home of Seattle's first building to receive a “gold” rating by the US Green Building Council's Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. This 1,750 square-foot building will

serve both as a demonstration project for visitors to learn about sustainable construction practices and as a place where children and adults can learn about the Piper's Creek watershed.

Some of the special features of the Center include:

- ◆ Large barrels to capture rooftop rainwater for flushing toilets and watering landscape
- ◆ Energy-efficient intelligent lighting and natural ventilation
- ◆ Solar photovoltaic panels that we anticipate will produce more than enough electricity to run the building
- ◆ Salmon-friendly landscaping – drought tolerant native species and increased storm water infiltration
- ◆ Use of special paints/coatings, adhesives, sealants, wood composites and carpeting that protect indoor air quality.
- ◆ Recycled-content and salvaged products – concrete, backfill, insulation, flooring, and peeler logs from South Lake Union

Community Partner

EarthCorps Thinks Globally. Works Locally

A valued partner since 1993, EarthCorps has completed projects in more than 45 Seattle parks over the past ten years. Project highlights include the Frink Park and Deadhorse Canyon Loop Trails, IvyOUT in Seward Park, the Lincoln Park hillside access trails, and the stairs, trail and waterfall in Madrona Woods.



Recently the Seattle Foundation awarded EarthCorps the 2002 Leadership Grant. This \$100,000 grant will support their youth-driven, two-year project to restore Cheasty Greenspace, a 43-acre urban forest in South Seattle. The goal of EarthCorps' project is to engage young people from Beacon Hill and the Rainier Valley in the process of transforming this neglected greenspace into one that invites community use and helps to build environmental understanding and stewardship in the neighborhoods surrounding it.

EarthCorps Program Director Pieter Bohen sums it up by saying, “Everyone wins: the youth participate in a transformational experience; the local communities unite around their green spaces; and our rich flora and fauna will flourish for future millennia.”

As Parks Senior Urban Forester Mark Mead is quick to point out, “EarthCorps' project will allow Parks to greatly accelerate our work in the Cheasty Greenspace. EarthCorps will be able to accomplish in two years what it has taken us five or six years to accomplish in other parks such as Frink, Carkeek, or Madrona.”

Red Wigglers, the Cadillac of Worms

When Senior Gardener Mary Preus began working at Southeast Parks Resources last year, she found an unused worm bin languishing on site. Mary, an accomplished worm rancher and author of *The Northwest Herb Lovers Handbook*, brought red wigglers from home, placed strips of newspaper and leaves as bedding in the bin, and started putting food scraps into the bin for the worms to convert to compost. This spring, gardeners used 25 gallons of worm castings from this bin as fertilizer in area flower beds. By feeding the worms and the soil with leftover people food, Mary and staff complete the cycle at Genesee.

Mary notes that Craig Harris, Maintenance Laborer, drilled drainage and air holes into a Rubbermaid storage container to create the bin. (Try this at home!) Mary's book contains lots of worm ranching instructions and you can order red wigglers online at YelmWorms.com.

Walking Our Talk is published three times a year for the employees of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Our goal is to inspire us all by highlighting the people and programs that make Seattle Parks a leader in environmental stewardship. We welcome your input – please send us story ideas, kudos, anecdotes, and photos about activities you or your co-workers are doing to help make our urban environment healthier. Ideas or questions? Contact us at parkses@seattle.gov, or call Leila Wilke at 206/733–9707. Editor: Dewey Potter
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